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ASHES AND SPARKS

“Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!”

—*From Shelley's ODE TO THE WEST WIND.*





A decorative border of repeating floral and leaf motifs surrounds the text.

ASHES AND SPARKS

BY

RICHARD WIGHTMAN

Author of "The Things He Wrote to Her,"
"Soul-Spur," etc.



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To
My Lady Patricia

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ASHES AND SPARKS

ASHES AND SPARKS

AT THE SHRINE OF THE HILL- BROOK

SING to me, little stream, sing to me long,
The soul of me thirsts for thy undulant
song.

Prone in thy grasses I listening lie,
Pine trees and verdant leas, bracken and sky
Are near to me, dear to me, but, little stream,
Sing me away to the sweet Land of Dream.

AT SHRINE OF THE HILL-BROOK

The fag of the city has mantled my heart,
My weary feet bleed from the thorns of the
 mart,

The spirit within me is ill with the strife,
But thou art unwearied, O, blithe thing of life!
I am pleading, and needing thy lilt and thy
 gleam—

Sing to me, sing to me now, little stream!

THE LANE

“**H**OW far will you go with me, my love?
To the stile, or the bridge, or the great
oak-tree?

The lane is a lonely and fearsome place,
And there's no one journeying there but
me.”

She smiled at the stile with a sweet disdain;
She scoffed at the bridge and the great oak-
tree;

And looked me full in the eyes and said,
“I will go to the end of the lane with thee.”

THE LANE

Then I loved her anew, with a strange, fierce
love,

As high as the stars and as deep as the sea :
She would share my heaven and share my
hell!

She would go to the end of the lane with me.

LURE O' DREAMS

“**W**HERE do you keep your dreams, my
boy?

Your face is lit, and for very joy

Your feet are swift in the vale and lea,—

Tell me, pray, where your dreams may be.”

“They are wonderful dreams,” he made
reply,

“And I share them not with the passer-by.

Here in my heart I have hid them deep;

They bless my waking and thread my sleep

With golden strands—but I must not tell,—

LURE O' DREAMS

They are wonderful dreams and serve me
well!"

"Where are your dreams?" His face was
tense

With the toil of years, and the wage-man's
pence

Was hung where the weary day grew dim;
"Where are your dreams?" I asked of him.

He raised his face in the late sun's glare
And took his cap from the graying hair.
"They were wonderful dreams," he made
reply,

"And I shared them not with the passer-by.
Here in my heart I hid them deep
As men hide rubies, but oh, the steep
Rough Way and the hunger keen,

LURE O' DREAMS

And the dry brook-bed where the willows
lean
Their dead trunks vainly!"

He drove his spade
Deep where the line of the trench was laid,
And from the swamp, across the hill,
Came the sad far cry of the whip-poor-will.

MY BODY AND I

I GOT this body in the Fleshing Shop
When it was small and pudgy-like and
red;

No teeth it had nor could it stand erect,—
A fuzzy down grew sparse upon its head.

At sight of it the neighbors stood and
laughed,

And tickled it and jogged it up and down;
Then some one put it in a little cart
And wheeled it gaily through the gaping
town.

MY BODY AND I

When it grew bigger and could walk and
run,

I wet it in the pond above the mill,
Or took it to a building called a "school,"
And there I had to keep it very still.

And later, when its muscles stronger grew,
I made it sow and reap to get its grain,
And tanned it in the summer's fiercest suns,
And toughened it with wind and cold and
rain.

It served to keep me near my friend, the
Earth,

It helped me well to get from place to place,
And then, perhaps, a tiny bit of me
Has sometimes worked out through its
hands and face!

MY BODY AND I

How long I've had it! longer than it seems

Since first they wrapped it in a linen clout,
And now 't is shrivelled, patched and break-
ing down—

I guess, forsooth, that I have worn it out!

And *I*? O, bless you! I am ever young.

A soul ne'er ages, is nor bent nor gray,
And when the body breaks and crumbles
down—

The Fleshing Shop is just across the way!

HER ROSARY

A CHAIN of gold, pearl-strung; a sym-
boled cross;

The imaged form of Him who hung thereon
For love, in whose great name thy prayer
Ascends for me, my sweet, when I am gone!

O vigils of thy heart! O sacred pearls,
Worn by thy fingers as thou pleadst my weal!
The only answering meed I have for thee
Is mine own soul, sealed with love's scarlet
seal!

THE GRASSHOPPER AEROPLANES

'NEATH arching skies benignly blue,
Where zigzag fences skirt the lanes,
One August day I lolled aglee
And watched the myriad aeroplanes.

I saw them fuel in the grass
And preen them ere began their flight;
I heard the little engines whir,
And then—ah, 't was a pretty sight!

From stalk of timothy they sped
To light upon the jimson-weed,

THE GRASSHOPPER AEROPLANES

Or circled in the drowsy air
Above the wheat-field's waving meed.

And some were green and some were brown,
And some a soft and elfish gray
As on the air-paths undulant
They sailed and sailed the hours away.

Singly, paired, in gauzy flocks,
They rode upon the summer breeze
'Mid cheers of finch and chick-a-dee
And locust-fiddling in the trees!

THE FRONTIERSMAN

THE suns of summer seared his skin;
The cold his blood congealed;
The forest giants blocked his way;
The stubborn acres' yield
He wrenched from them by dint of arm,
And grim old Solitude
Broke bread with him and shared his cot
Within the cabin rude.
The gray rocks gnarled his massive hands;
The north wind shook his frame;
The wolf of hunger bit him oft;
The world forgot his name;

THE FRONTIERSMAN

But 'mid the lurch and crash of trees,
Within the clearing's span
Where now the bursting wheat-heads dip,
The Fates turned out—a man!

IN THE NEW COUNTRY

(A CAMEO)

I WANT Lucille. I've grubbed on this
old Section now for months
And lashed the stubborn acres with my steel,
But now my heart, all human-like, cries out
—I want Lucille.

The cabin is quite finished—every crevice
mortared—and the roof
Is fit for any rain. The stove is set
And all the dishes patient on their shelves;
The bed with its checked coverlet is there
In its own corner, and the chair

IN THE NEW COUNTRY

I made for her is rocking empty in the
breeze;

The nails on which to hang her things are
driven

And the mirror placed at her own height, a
little less than mine.

Out in the shed the Alderney is tied and
Bess, her mare,

Is coated for the Fall. The saddle on its
rack

Is waiting, as am I, just for Lucille.

It's strange, is n't it, how strong a man can
be

And yet how lonesome he can feel?

But I don't care—I want Lucille!

THE CHATTEL

A MAN on the block in the city's Square,
Thronged with bidders from far and
near!

I can see his face in the red sun's glare
Pale at the cry of the Auctioneer.

"How much am I offered—a dollar? *Ten?*

Oh, come now! give me a decent bid!

For men in the market are always men,

And in this one there's a fortune hid.

Why, look at his eyes, now the shift and fall!

And look at his hands with their nervous
clutch!

And the scheming brain of him—look ye all!

THE CHATTEL

What?—*scruple?*—say!—well, not *over-*
much!

Ten thousand? *Twenty?* (I almost
laughed!)

Come! Here is a very exceptional man—
He 'll plug your game and he 'll work your
graft,

And push to the finish your rottenest plan.
Twenty-five thousand—once!—twice!—are
you done?

The man 's in his prime—'t would be cheap
were he old;

He 's a long way ahead of the regular run—
And I 'm bid *twenty-five*—fair warning!
SOLD!"

THE DISADVANTAGES OF CHAZY

(ADIRONDACKS)

THERE is no market here. On certain
days

One rides along the unfrequented ways,
Beckons the farmer from his mellow field
And buys first-handed what his acres yield.

There are no steamboats here. His arm is
brown

Who spurns the varied engines of the town,
And to the measured rhythm of the oar
Bounds in his skiff along the verdant shore.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF CHAZY

There are no pavements here. The forest
loam

Signals our feet and far we blithely roam
Where strange, sweet odors soothe our little
ills,

And valleys guide the courses of the rills.

There is no college here. But well endowed
Is every growing thing and every cloud,
And He who knoweth all imparts His mind
Unsparingly to docile hearts and kind.

There are no churches here. The only
spires

Are those upon the pine-trees, but the fires
Of true oblation burn their brightest when
Prayer is exultant with no last amen.

HER NEED SUPREME

WHAT do I want most of all, most of
all,

O, man of my heart, with the world within
call?

You are generous, quite, with your gems and
your gold,

You keep me from starving and keep me
from cold,

But a woman's a rose on its bush by the
wall,

And—I want you to want me, dear,—that
most of all!

A WAYSIDE REVERIE

THE past? Well, what of the past, I
say!

Poor outworn thing; can I mend it, pray?

Do tears avail for the misspent days?

Will pining straighten the crooked ways?

Must yesterday's heartbreak last for ay,

And yesterday's mist hide the sun to-day?

Nay, life is life, and the farer's toll

Is a hopeful heart as the hours unroll.

The path ascends; each winding rood

Blooms at the touch of a blithesome mood.

I will hold that the best is a bit beyond

A WAYSIDE REVERIE

And drink a toast from the lily's frond—
A toast in dew to the day that 's done,
And one to the better day begun.

THE SCULPTOR

MARBLE is docile to me,
Like a world, all nebular,
Awaiting its designer
And valueless until I give it life.
No form it has, nor soul,
Nor spell of beauty;
No angel shows,
Nor hint of human grace.
'T is stone—not more—mere stone,
And fit for but a peasant's spit
Or kick of his thick boot.
And then—I dream!

THE SCULPTOR

(Ah, God, I dream!)

And toil,

(Ah, God, I toil!)

And something comes of it,

A something white and gleaming

In the City's Square.

"Look there!" they cry,

"A General!" "A Pope!"

"A Statesman!" or "A Poet!"

"Wonderful!"

But on my bench beneath the tree

I sit and smile—

The fools! And blind at that!

I am the statue, whatsoe'er its form.

My soul and sweat are there,

And all my awful years.

Myself is in the stone!

THE CYNIC'S ADVICE

THERE is only one task, little man, little
man,

In this wonderful, wonderful Island of
Trade;

'T is to capture the dollars wherever you
can—

Nor matters the motive, nor matters the plan
So long as you do it,—thus winners are
made.

So heat your heart, lad, in the hot money-
fire,

And harden it well in the cold tank of greed;

THE CYNIC'S ADVICE

On gold and dominion set fast your desire
And never to justice and kindness aspire,
But trample your brothers and laugh when
they bleed.

For "business is business,"—remember that
well,

'Tis a fine, sturdy maxim time-honored and
true,

(I doubt, as some say, that 't was authored
in hell)

Adopt it and Bradstreet your triumph will
tell,

And you will get—all that is coming to you!

ADIRONDACKS

SOUND, sweet sleep on a balsam bed,
A dip in the lake at morn,
A climb to the crest of Eagle's Nest,
The ring of the breakfast horn;
A laugh at the quip of my comrades brown,
A reach for the reel and rod,
A swinging pace for the streams that race
Down the hills of the Land of God;
The swish of the ferns in the brackened trail,
The give of the loam 'neath my feet,
The squirrel's chirr, the woodcock's whirl,
The call of the veery sweet;

ADIRONDACKS

A still approach to the waiting pool,
A cast, a flash, a thrill,
And a shortened line where the roots
entwine
To test the fisher's skill;
A varied wade through a rocky maze,
By noon a weight in the creel;
A venison snack, a drowse, and back
With a heart of hope and weal.
This may list low to the men who know
The tricks of the Street's mad strife,
But if I may, just let me say—
By George, I call it life!

THE PILGRIM

I AM my ancient self.
Long paths I've trod,
The luring light before,
Behind, the rod;
And in the beam and blow
The misty God.

I am my ancient self.
My flesh is young,
But old, mysterious words
Engage my tongue,
And weird, lost songs
Old bards have sung.

THE PILGRIM

I have not fared alone.

In mount and dell

The one I fain would be

Stands by me well,

And bids my man's heart list

To the far bell.

Give me nor ease nor goal—

Only the Way,

A bit of bread and sleep

Where the white waters play,

The pines, the patient stars,

And the new day.

THE NAKED DAY

THE day itself was glorious enough,
 Needing no drape of travel or of talk,
And so I lay at reverent ease
Beside the shadowed walk,
And drank deep of the beauty of the day
And put my sighs and little sins away.

THE SOUL'S SONG OF
INDEPENDENCE

PUT out the stars!
My essence is light;
I laugh at the haste
Of the darkness in flight.

Dry up the streams!
I am fertile and, lo,
My springs are within me
To ward the drought's blow.

SOUL'S SONG OF INDEPENDENCE

Burn all the books!
They are fragments of Him
Who is with me and of me,
My sinew and limb.

Unmast the flags!
My banner I 'll be,
Hued with the dye-stuffs
Of Infinity.

Scuttle the ships!
On the paths of the sea
I will fleet to the Islands
Of far Arcady.

Banish the market!
My barter in dreams
I carry on shrewdly
Where no arc-light gleams.

SOUL'S SONG OF INDEPENDENCE

Level the towns!
I'm a child of the plain
And merrily houseless
I journey amain.

Melt down the gold
Till it seethes in the pot!
I am my riches,
Of Cræsus begot.

Woo my friends from me!
I am my best friend
In a compact of comradeship,
Never to end.

Bury the flesh!
I am I and for ay
Will bide through the eons
And hail the young day!

THE PLOWMAN

GEE up there, Brain! Gee up there,
Hand!

I am a tiller of the land.

Ye are my oxen docile, strong,

To make the furrow straight and long.

I'll feed ye, rest ye, tend ye well,

And stall ye at the evening bell.

But now 't is morn; the uplands lie

To take their pulsing pregnancy.

The plow is set; its sheening steel

Is eager for the harvest's weal.

So haw there, Brain! and haw there, Hand!

I am a tiller of the land!

MOOD O' JUNE

(A RHAPSODY OF DEFIANCE)

STAND back, ye irking devils of despair!

Behold, my head is bare

To the balmed breeze from off the sapphire
sea

And lifted to the sun. For unto me

The Voices call, call resonant and clear,—

*“Live, man! live strong! Another June is
here!”*

June! Look—a belted bee is in the rose,

And soon will stagger in his flight to close

MOOD O' JUNE

The comb with weight of gathered sweet.

And, see—

A red-wing 's on the flag and swinging free!

I catch the flash of crimson mid the jet,

As there he balances above the wet,

Lush grass beside the pasture-pond, where
slow,

Brown cattle at the evening go.

Now, too, the brook its cheery gossip spills

Into the pools among the shaded hills,

Or widens in the meadow to caress

The crisp tangled leaves of the o'er-bending
cress,

While in the riffles finning trout await

With upstream heads the fall of fly or bait.

Up from their Earth the floral children rise

And blow their kisses to the wooing skies

In gleeful troth, and deck themselves anew

With filmy fabrics spangled o'er with dew.

MOOD O' JUNE

The useful grass along the fertile plain
Stirs in the heat and becks the friendly rain,
And high the lark his silver lyre tunes
To sift on all below its mystic runes.

Bird-song and bloom and reach of trellised
vine!

The Voices call, and all the earth is mine,
And for my feet the clovered paths that go
Where poise and peace abide!

And so—

Stand back, ye irking devils of despair!
A glass of June-wine in the odored air
I lift to Nature—to her hills and trees,
To wave and shallop by the bouldered leas,
To star and sun, to night and dewy dawn,
To days to be, to plaints and sorrows gone,
To life, to love, to Woman and to Man,
And to the utter goodness of the Plan!

THE WHITE OLD LADY

THE white old lady who lived next
door,

Whose face was weazened with years and
care,

Forgot for the moment her life's long stress,

Whenever Evangeline went there,

And curtsied and chirruped and acted
young—

Oh, the tales she told and the songs she sung!

Evangeline was a little child,

And the white old lady was long past that:

THE WHITE OLD LADY

She had buried her kinsfolk one by one,
And lived alone with her dog and cat.
And she stirred her gruel and baked her
tarts,
And harked for the sound of the tradesmen's
carts.

Evangeline was a little child—
A little child, as I said before—
And the white old lady knew well her knock,
For it often rang on the entry door:
And, stopping to right things and primp a bit,
The white old lady would answer it.

For sweetness the pinks in the garden there
Were not to be named with Evangeline,
As she 'd wait with her biggest and blondest
doll

THE WHITE OLD LADY

While the white old lady unlatched the
screen.

I never was asked to the party small,
But I 've sat at my window and guessed it all.

When the white old lady was old no more,
And had opened her eyes to the lasting
dawn,

And the choir sang in the stuffy room,
And the neighbors trod on the shaded
lawn,

The one real mourner was scarcely four—
She had oftenest knocked at the entry door.

THE SERVANTS

SINGER, sing! The hoary world
Needs reminder of its youth:
Prophet, tell! The darkness lies
On the labyrinths of truth:
Builder, build! Let rocks arise
Into cities 'neath thy hand:
Farmer, till! The sun and rain
Harken for the seed's demand:
Artist, paint! Thy canvases
Patiently convey thy soul:
Writer, write! With pen blood-dipped
Trace no segment, but the whole:
Teacher, teach! Thyself the creed—

THE SERVANTS

Only this a child may know:
Dreamer, dream! Nor hide thy face
Though thy castles crumble low.
Where the toiler turns the sod
Man beholds the living God.

MARGUERITE

I WILL not forsake thee, sweet Maiden
of Woe—

Thy lips like the cherry, thy breasts like
the snow.

The winds may be cruel to thy raven hair

But I'll hold thee, enfold thee, and soothe
thy despair.

Thine eyes tell the story of love that went
wrong,

And stilled is thy laughter and sobered thy
song,

MARGUERITE

But a path I will point to the Gardens of
Rest,

Where no rod is, where God is, O, Maiden
oppressed!

And the man? Ah, *the man!* Let him
shift as he may,

And bleed from the thorns that encompass
his way,

For justice ne'er sleeps and the man and his
kin

Shall sink o'er the brink of the Chasm of
Sin.

TRANSIENT SYMBOLS

(A CHRISTMAS POEM)

IN snowy vales the evergreen we seek,
And find it growing strong, with never
reek

Of passion or of greed or vaunting pride;
The ax descends upon its quivering side;
With glee the corse is shouldered to the feast,
But while succeeding suns flame in the East
The Tree of Life lives on.

Upon the patient boughs the candles flare
And shining trinkets are suspended there—
A top for Tom, a waxen doll for Sue—

TRANSIENT SYMBOLS

The jocund hour is as a dream come true;
But though the dream has vanished ere the
morn,

The candles die, the trinkets are outworn,
The Gift of gifts ne'er dims.

Though it be wrought in love—the Christ-
mas cheer—

Our hearts are changeful as the changeful
year,

Having their heat and chill,—bud, bloom,
decay.

Where are the friends and loves of yester-
day?

Gone like the whisp'rings of the restless sea!
But for the world's toil-struck humanity

The love of Christ abides.

THE TINDERBOX

THE structure stood, and Hope and
Dream—the timbers—crossed and
crossed;

Then Fate came by and carelessly a flaming
splinter tossed,

And merrily the sparks leaped high! Who
heard the weary builder's sigh?

SEVENTY-ODD

THEY say I 'm old,—perhaps I am,
But not too old to dream and laugh,
And I 've a pipe and a collie dog,
Some memories and an oaken staff.

They say the best of my span has gone.
That I deny, for today I know
The deep, true things of life and love
That were hid from me in the long ago.

I would not be a boy again,
With a boy's unrest and a boy's desire;
The long content of a later youth
Is best—and the glow of a later fire.

SEVENTY-ODD

I sit and rock with my hands at rest;
The sun is falling behind the hill;
And a reasoned faith in the things to be—
The better things—is with me still.

My house is small and my fare is plain;
My books are few and my eyes are dim;
But the stars are hung in their wonted place,
And the world is good to the very rim!

THE MENTOR

WITHIN my being, scarce perceived as
yet,

Stands fair a statue infinitely wrought,
And though too oft I grovel in the gloom
Its flawless lines cast over me their spell,
Shaming my spirit into hate of sin,
Luring my feet to altitudes unguessed.
And when at that most good and longed-for
day

The veil falls limp about the crystal base,
With leaping heart and vision clarified
I shall stand face to face with my true self.

THE GREAT MAN

THEY said that his lips were white-hot
With the touch of a coal from some
fire divine;

They said that his will was of iron—he stood
For the Cause and hewed straight to the
line;

They said that his courage was born of the
God

That was in him, directing his might;
They said that his torch was a heavenly
flame

To guide a vast people aright.

THE GREAT MAN

But, in his own heart, he was conscious each
hour

That the faith of a woman was suckling his
pow'r.

SING ON, O HEART!

O HEART, sing on! The drought is
long,

The birds are panting—stilled their song;
The typhoon marshals in the plain,
The air is hot, no sign of rain,
But still, O Heart, sing on!

O Heart, sing on! Somewhere bides She
Who lives and hopes and waits for thee.
I know not when nor where thy quest
Shall end, and thou shalt find thy rest,
But still, O Heart, sing on!

SING ON, O HEART!

Sing on, O Heart! The summit far
Is topped by light of yonder star;
The climb is sheer, nor paved with ease,
The wind is mournful in the trees,
But still, O Heart, sing on!

Sing on, O Heart! That thou canst sing
Holds sure the promise of the spring,
And love's fruition full and long,
And thine own height above the throng,—
And so, O Heart, sing on!

THE DISTINCTION OF DIFFERENCE

I DO not want to be a cog in the whirling
wheel of a great machine,

Nor merely a drop in the turbulent stream
that flows where the elms and the wil-
lows lean;

Nor a chair like the other chairs set in a row
with their backs all shaped to a common
line,—

Conform! Conform! is the cry I hear but I
never will bow to a will not mine.

I do not choose to be the thing the whiplash
hits in its swift decent;

THE DISTINCTION OF DIFFERENCE

A slave is a slave though the field be fair and
manhood dies when the soul is bent.

Aye, serving is good but I serve as a king
with glance shot straight at the earthly
Plan,

For the life-blood leaps in my veins today
and I 'll be, by the gods' good grace—a
man.

THE EXPOSITION

SHE and I went to it—the Big Fair.

We were the whole Attendance.

It was all under one roof, which was called
the Sky.

Every day this was rehued by invisible
brushes, gloriously,

And at night all lit by countless lights, star-
shaped,

And arranged curiously in the form of Dip-
pers and things.

It must have cost a fortune in some kind of
rare coin

To do it that way.

THE EXPOSITION

By day the place was vast and very beautiful.
The far edge of it, all around, was called the
Horizon.

Each morning, out of the East,
A huge golden disk came
And swung itself slowly up along the arch
of the sky-roof
And settled to the Westward, leaving numer-
ous glories behind.

There was a water-place there, a Lake, with
an Inlet and an Outlet.

It was not little and brown like those you see
at the Sportsman's Show,
But big and blue and clean.
We splashed ourselves in it and laughed, like
children.

The Lake had trout in it;
I saw them leap when the water was still
And the golden disk was falling.

THE EXPOSITION

I looked around for a "Don't" sign,
But there was none;
So I took a hook and caught some,
And She cooked them, for I had built a fire.
(You see, one could do almost anything
there that one liked;
There were no Rules.)
And there was a Spring, which kept filling
itself and filling itself from somewhere,
And spilling itself over its brim into the Lake,
As if it were not a bit afraid there would n't
be any more.
The Spring was clear and cold,
And we knelt by it and saw ourselves in it,
And sucked its water through our lips.
There were also real trees, beeches and
birches,
And sometimes a real wind swayed them,
And their leaves made a sound

THE EXPOSITION

Like the song of soft voices blended.
Pines there were, too, and balsams
But they were very still and dignified,
And never bent much, even when the wind
was in them.

(We rented our cot from the balsams—
The one we slept on the nights we were there.
And, oh, such a sleep!)
And hills! You should have seen them!
Each was different from the others,
An individual, but together they made a
Range,
With a wavy top-line against the sky-roof.
And we climbed the hills and lost our breath,
And on their crests stood long,
And looked out over wooded valleys
Threaded by satin streams.
It was better for our eyes than an oculist's
shop.

THE EXPOSITION

Then, up there, we would sit down on the
moss-cushions, She and I,
And hum some old tunes, some very old
tunes,
And be quietly happy—
A sort of happiness that did n't seem to need
anything
Outside of itself.
We did n't see the Manager at all,
But there must have been one around there
somewhere
To arrange all this and look after it.
And we did n't pay anything to get in;
Our hearts invited us.

THE FRIEND

TAKE the lid from off your heart and let
me see within;

Curious, I, and impudent, a rugged man of
sin.

And yet I hold you truer than would presi-
dent or priest;

I put my bowl against your lip and seat you
at my feast;

I probe your wound and chafe your limbs
and get my gods to see

That you are strengthened as we fare the
forest and the lea.

THE FRIEND

Strike hands with me—the glasses brim—
the sun is on the heather,
And love is good and life is long and two
are best together.

THE GAUNTLET FLUNG TO DEATH

WHERE cedars lift and grasses sway
It waits—*my grave*—and I scarce
gray.

Well, let it feed upon my form
While I, alive and strong and warm,
Go blithely on my way.

Ah, surely for no grave was I
Intended, but for lea and sky
And stretch of wood and lily-flame.
Mayhap this hulking mortal frame
Will crumble, but not I!

LINCOLN

1809-1865

AND he was once a babe, little and like
any other,

Wan, slow-eyed, knowing not his mother,
knowing only her breasts,

Sleeping in the day, showing no hint of
stature or of pow'r!

What recked he that the walls about were
less than palace walls,

Or that the snow, sifting upon him through
the log-crevices,

Was not the dust of warm and gentle stars?

LINCOLN

Rude-handed they who tended him—rough
miners with a Kohinoor—
And yet were they the tools of God to help
that babe to be!

Then sun succeeded sun, and to the wid'ning
eyes of Youth

Far heights on heights stood clear,
Topped by a nameless glory to be won
By life and love and tireless trust in Right,
And patient toil and fearless grapple with
the Wrong.

'T was but the vision of a dreamful boy,
But in it surely lay the unity of States,
The lengthened gleam of all the Flag's fair
stars,
And justice done to men—some white, some
black,

LINCOLN

The owners and the owned,
But bonded all until the great Decree!

And O, the soul of him
So stalwartly enbarred within its clay,
Yet roaming far, halting not upon the shores
 of his America,
Crossing seas and deserts to set up its claim
Of universal kinship!

We say we are his people,—proudly we say
 it and with reverence,—
But in his heart he kept all men and fathered
 them with tenderness.
Almost it seemed as if from out his loins—
This great parental man—the race had
 sprung!

LINCOLN

He knew no couch of down, no viands rare,
no easy leveled way.

Lonely he fought his fight and gained the
meed of Wisdom,

The insignia of Poise, and Love's gemmed
chaplet, fadeless through the years.

We say that he was born, and date his death,
But while the light seeks out the vales, and
darkness holds them close,

This man shall be!

THE INDIVIDUAL

I WILL obey my light
Though my light be night;
This is the only right.

I will declare my word
Though to the world absurd;
Thus only may I be heard.

I will live out my dream
Though it should folly seem,
And but for me the gleam.

THE INDIVIDUAL

I will pursue my way
Though no illumining ray
Eases the toilsome day.

Others may scout the plan,
Wise men my nature ban—
I will be my own man.

THE MAN-CHILD

THE World's great Child, born and re-
born, is Dream,
Oft parented by Penury and Pain;
Nor drifts he ever on a tranquil stream.
His heritage is wind and cold and rain.

No sable wears he when the blast is keen,
No couch of down e'er knows his weary
frame;
Upon no shoulder may he fainting lean,
His breast is valleyed by the scorch of flame.

THE MAN-CHILD

The sordid eye ne'er looks upon his face
Till it is wrought in canvas or in stone,
But ever comes he to the souls who know
And claim and hold him for their very own.

Within the life of every child he lies
And gently stirs the curtain of the soul
Till, peeping forth, the youthful eye descries
The glinting of the fair and distant goal.

He is the great Companion of the few
Whose windows open toward the early sun,
Who find all love within a drop of dew
And worship where the silver hill-brooks run.

He sees the iron hidden in its earth,
Black ballast of the whirling, circling sphere,
And, shaping it, brings cities to their birth
While nations pause to wonder and to cheer.

THE MAN-CHILD

He seeks the attic where the genius bends
Above his task with wan and nerveless
 hands,
And spur of hope and tireless patience lends
To him whose thought shall blossom through
 the lands.

O, Dream, live on! and live and live again!
Scorned and derided thou art Prince supreme;
Ruler of progress in the world of men,
Ever thine own shall love and hail thee,
 Dream!

THE PATH TO HEAVEN

'T WAS a wee little path, this path I
would sing.

It ran thro' the meadow and skirted the
spring;

In and out 'mongst the sumachs and on
through the wood

Where the tall, green-domed hemlocks in
majesty stood.

Across it a squirrel frisked lissome and gray,
And a chipmunk perched chattering not
far away.

'T was a wee little path, as was said at the
start,

THE PATH TO HEAVEN

But 't was ample to lure my feet and my
heart,
For it led to a tryst-spot, the old poplar-tree,
Where Clarissa was patiently waiting for
me.

To Sir Ernest H. Shackleton, C.V.O., guest of the Transportation Club, New York, March 30, 1910.

THE QUEST

THE test of man is ever in his tasks;
His deeds—ah, these his inmost soul
 reveal,
And show him craven or of courage fine
To forfeit ease and urge the human weal.
The treasures man would gain are hidden
 deep,
Fast-locked beneath his feet the old earth
 lies;
The flowers of progress bloom in endangered
 ways

THE QUEST

And yield their fragrance but to brave em-
prise.

And some there be who hug the hearth, or
lean

To gentle gain within the place of trade;
And some the craft of statesmanship essay
In governmental halls where laws are made.
The docile canvas waits the artist's soul,
The colors on the palette patient lie
To meet the beck of him who would portray
The varied hues of landscape and of sky.
The wan inventor bends the heated steel,
The soldier arms for battle at the dawn,
The writer limns his story of mankind,
The singer sings his song and passes on.
Each in his acre holds his sheening plow,
Commanded but to till as best he may,
And who shall say that these have lived in
vain

THE QUEST

Or strewn their seed along a barren way?
But great is he who feels the lure of lands
Uncharted, where no human foot has trod;
Who hears afar from out the icy vast,
His call—the summons of an onward God.
This man, this son of reasoned discontent—
The flame of conquering within his breast—
What recks he of the city's paven lanes,
Of feasting, or of cushioned ease and rest?
For him naught but the long and rugged way,
The memoried kiss of her who could not go,
The ceaseless stare of cold antarctic suns,
The fearful marches through eternal snow;
The tug of hunger at his shrinking frame,
No hearth-fire lending its warm meed of
cheer,
Companioned oft by solitude and pain
Amid the vigils of the awesome year!
But once again has man his fiber shown,

THE QUEST

And Aspiration's banner flung afar;
For him awaits the chaplet of the brave,
The silent Hail of every gleaming star.
The quest unfinished,—ah, 't is ever sweet!
The goal unreached, the best of life ne'er
done!

And on the scroll of couraged men and great,
Writ clear in light, the name of Shackleton.

THE GUARDING LOVE

IF in my life's long, eager quest
I faltered, fell and missed my best;
Or bent my brow to take a bay
Gained in some base, unhonored way—
What would She say?

If when in weariness her soul
Should crave me, and I flung a dole—
A hasty word, a careless hour—
And gave her not my heart's best dow'r,—
What would She say?

THE GUARDING LOVE

If to my path another came
And kissed my lips and breathed my name
As women do in passion's ruth,
Wanting a man but not his truth—
What would She say?

If in the eons yet to be
'Mid waning stars and shrinking sea,
When e'en our graves are quite forgot,
She called me and I answered not—
What would She say?

THE CRISIS HOUR

AMBUSHED within the Swamp of Time
it lay,

And toward it, fearing naught, I made my
way.

I thought that life was peace and love and
joy—

Thus did they teach me when I was a boy.

And so I wandered on, unarmored, weak,

When something—sharp and gleaming—
smote my cheek,

And something splashed upon my pallid arm

And frightened me, for it was red and warm.

THE CRISIS HOUR

The pines were there and in the sky a star,
But in that hour I learned that life is war.

There have been other hours, and other scars
Gained 'mid the placid pines, 'neath smiling
stars,

And not in vain if late some voice may say,
"Look there! A soldier goeth on his way!"

THE HEART UNIVERSAL

OH, I am the bee in the clover-head
And the breeze in the leaning birches,
And the foam-capped wave of the lusty sea
Where the craft of the seaman lurches,
And the lilt of the song in the maiden's
throat,
And the glint of a wing in the cover,
For the gods in a kindly mood decreed
That I might be—a lover!

IF THIS BE LIFE AND DEATH

A LITTLE itching of the soul;
The briefest glimpse of a distant
goal;

A fall—full-face—in the cutting sand;

A gasp, a pallor, an icy hand,—

If this be life and death, I say

Then let me die, and die today.

But if life be the surge I feel

Bearing me on through endless weal

'Neath faithful suns and smiling stars,

O'er soundless depths and gleaming bars,

IF THIS BE LIFE AND DEATH

Through storms that threaten, calms that
lull,

Drunk with the silence wonderful,
Or keen to take the lore that lies

In Nature's fine immensities;
If life with all its pain and stress

Is but a lure to onwardness;
If death reveal an ampler life

With greater love and vision rife,—
If such be life and death, I say

Then let me live and die away!

To James Schoolcraft Sherman, Vice-President of the United States, to whom was presented at the Transportation Club, New York City, January 14, 1909, a gavel for use in the United States Senate, made from the wood of one of the American gunboats in action at the naval Battle of Champlain in the War of the Revolution.

PRESENTATION ODE

THE land lay hermited betwixt the seas
As rich as now—gold in its hills, pow'r
in its streams, warmth in its leas.

Magnolia, maple, eucalyptus, pine

Were compass-points; no dim and varying
governmental line

Wavered along its span,

Although a man

With skin of copper hue would sometimes
bend to drink

PRESENTATION ODE

Above the brink
Of some clear pool whose basin lay
Hollowed in Nature's way—
Irregular, and mossy at the brim,
And friendly, beckoning the skim
Of swallows and the feet of panting deer.
And God was here,—
Aye, God, with face enveiled by that fine
 fabric, we have come to know
As Opportunity,—a fabric, O most lumi-
 nous, and lo,
By faith, by tide, by wind, by evening star,
Men came in little ships from lands afar,
And bent their knees upon this hermit soil,
And made it blossom with the wand of toil!

Beneath the cleavage of the flashing blade
Tall trees were laid
Prone in the forest, and the clearings, sweet

PRESENTATION ODE

With the lure of nurture, wooed the wheat
And made each grain a stalk,
Full-headed, while the gentle talk
Of women graced the harvest, and the cabin
fire

In winter met the heart's desire
For comradeship and thoughtfulness and
cheer;

All the long year
Was benisoned by labor, song and prayer,—
And love was there.

The Pilgrims bred, for in their loins lay
The ancient urge of Nature. 'T is the way
Of sturdy sires to get them sturdy sons,
And when the time-worn guns
Rang out to save a heritage
Of hope and toil, Youth vied with Age
In opening its veins

PRESENTATION ODE

Upon the plains
Of Lexington, and wet the decks of quickly-
 built ships
With crimson ooze from lips
Which, to the last, spake couraged words of
 cheer
From hearts which knew nor fear
Nor mood to flee,
Counting such death a victory!

Then, in a later day, our Lincoln came
And did his work, and passed on in a flame
Of glory and a drench of tears!
The boasted years
We call our own are dowered with the touch
 of vanished hands.
The Western lands
Are sown with Pilgrim wheat, and in the
 strange new courage of the hour

PRESENTATION ODE

Which balks not at the place of gold or
pow'r

If but the Right may be,

We clearly see

The shining of the face

Of him who knew no race

Save man,

And made the wise Lincolnian plan

Of State as big and kind as God,

Knowing no rod

Save Justice, with the common good

Welded within the forge of Brotherhood.

The Nation's chief distinguishment is not its
tow'rs

Which, in the morrow's hours

May fall. Nor is it in the lines of steel

Spun far to gain the weal

Of traffic. Nay, rather must it e'er be seen

PRESENTATION ODE

Enduring, glorious, serene,
Within the souls of its own sons who were
 and are
Dreamers of Truth beneath the great white
 Star
Of Progress, pendant in the vaulted sky
To light this land to its good destiny.

Our institutions change, likewise our
 laws;
The program of the Seasons knows its pause;
The very rivers thread along
New courses, and the lark's blithe song
Is altered by the meadow's mood;
But every onward rood
Of the long path our fathers chose,—
Down to the very close
Of days,—is ours to dare, elate and free,
Clothed with that ancient loyalty

PRESENTATION ODE

To Right which made America the land
whose name
And birthright we so proudly claim.

*And now, Sir, in your hand we place this
wood,
Symboling order and the Nation's good.
Your task, Sir, is not little, but the shades
Of patriot fathers steal from out the glades
Of early strife to hearten you, and say—
"Serve as we served; yours is the greater
day!"*

AFTER THE THORNS

CALM Night, soft Night, hold me close
and tell me

Where the soul of me may rest! Wondrous
woes befell me

All along the Way of Life. Do not count
me fretful,

But I would die, or live, or swoon, could I
but be forgetful.

Calm Night, soft Night, be to me a mother;
She I had has gone away, and there is none
other.

IN A DESERT PLACE

ONCE in a desert, 'mid the heat
I found a rock and spring,
And now within my quiet home
Their ministry I sing.

Long since the rock and spring forgot
The worn and thirsty man
Who took the shade and drank the
draught,
When stopped the caravan.

Exampled by the rock and spring,
O, Father, teach me yet
To bide where goes the caravan,
To serve and then forget.

THE LAST LULLABY

LITTLE heart, a bird is flying!
Ease thyself for thou art dying,
Wearied long by need and trying—
Take thy meed of rest.

Little heart, the sun is setting,
Symbol of thine own forgetting
Of the chains, the lash, the fretting—
Not one soul has guessed!

WHEN YOU ARE GONE

WHEN you are gone the phoebe's call is
 stilled,
Or seems to be;
The sheen upon the maple's green is dulled
As by a shadow;
My eyes, unseeing, make me miss
The violets,
Though they are blooming there
As when we stooped in quiet joy
To break their dew-wet stems.
Over the stars a veil is hung,
And all the sadness of the sea

WHEN YOU ARE GONE

Is flung upon the sands.
(To feel your hands
Upon my brow!
To feel them—*now!*)
The hurt of you afar
Is in the sun and rain,
And I am bent and old—
When you are gone.

TRANSCIENCE

THE song I sang but yesterday,
Alas, I sing no more!

Its notes have died upon my lips,
For I have passed the door
That opens to another day,
Which asks an unfamiliar lay.

No time without its music is,
But songs and singers pass
Like prayers unanswered by the gods,
Like shadows on the grass.
And yet it is a goodly thing
To live one day, one song to sing.

THE CONQUEROR

I FACE my failure with a glad despair ;
Along the way I strove and strove
again;

And now that I have missed the goal, elate
I drink and laugh and speak a deep amen!

The world was roseate before my eyes ;
'T is roseate still, but with the glow of
fires

That feed upon the fabric of my dreams,
And leave me but the ash of my desires.

THE CONQUEROR

Yet I will love my life unto the end—

There is no end, for life is life for ay,
And by the goodness of a God unknown
I'll dare the issues of another day!

RELINQUISHMENT

I TOUCH thy lips and let thee go
And keep the hurt of it for ay,
While over moor and fen and hill
Stretches the long, long way.

At morn I hear the robin's call
And sense the odors of the Spring,
But song within my soul is pent
And hope has missed its blossoming.

I speed thee on thy later quest
And bow to take my stent of care;
Athirst I dip at Mem'ry's rill
And shrine thee in my prayer.

ANDREW F. BRANDO

WE call him *Brandy* in our summer
tongue.

He is not old, nor is he very young,—
Just old enough to be a boy again,
And young enough to dodge the woes of
men.

I saw him first all garnishèd with tar,
For he was fishing where the punkies are.
His catch that day was light, likewise his
heart,

The woods had smoothed his wrinkles—
't is their art.

ANDREW F. BRANDO

His voice was like the hill-brook in its fall
'Mongst rocks where woven branches
shelter all;

He took my hand as if we long had known
Each other, and would never more be lone.

He came and sat beside my oaken fire
And helped the flames to light the camp
entire;

I pulled *his* latchstring and he met me fair,—
I could not tell the things that happened
there!

O, royal host, O, fisherman of skill,
Husband your strength and live among us
still!

I'll fish with you till all my flies are lost,
Or all the trout into the basket tossed.
When worn with toil, O friend, to you I look,
Craving a swig of *Brandy* on the brook!

THE MAIDEN

SHE came with her new-found heart at
morn

And stood by the wordless sea,
Amid the litter of lifeless shells
Strewn high on the yellow lea.

And she looked away to the land's far end
And swept with her eyes the sea,
And cried as her hair caught the shoreward
wind:

"Oh, who will my lover be?
Pray, stands he tall in a soldier's shoes,
Or sails he over the sea?

THE MAIDEN

Or reaps he grain in the Autumn field—

 This lover who lives for me?

Or sings he songs in the city's streets,

 Or casts his net in the sea,

Or writes his heart on a living page—

 Oh, who will my lover be?"

Aye, ever she comes with her new-found
 heart

 And stands by the wordless sea,

And cries to the wild, unansw'ring winds:

 "Oh, who will my lover be?"

THE JAIL-BREAKER

I CAUGHT my happiness and chained it
fast.

It laughed and slipped the fetters, and I
knew

My prisoner had been a dream, a breath,
A hint of mignonette, a drop of dew.

AS WOMAN LOVETH

IF I could be near thee, my love, at the
morn,

When the sun on the meadows is wooing
the dew,

And near thee at noon when the kine seek
the river

And lash their brown sides in the shade of
the yew;

If I could be near thee at every sun's setting,
And when the foamed sky with its stars is
alight—

Heart of me, soul of me, flesh of me pulsing,

AS WOMAN LOVETH

Ah, that would be heaven and that would
be right.

But since it may never be thus, O beloved,
I take with glad hands what the gods deign
to send—

A line from thy heart, or thine eyes' secret
glances,

The sound of thy footfall, our spirits' soft
blend.

To glimpse from my lattice thy form in its
passing,

To sense that thou art, though afar on the
main,

Is bread to me, wine to me, kiss and posses-
sion—

Aye, paltry the kingdoms where other
queens reign!

THE COMRADE

BE thou young, I will romp with thee,
Sun up, sun high, sun down, stars;
Be thou old, I will lean with thee,
Cackling over the cattle-bars.

Be thou sad, I will weep with thee:
Tears are water, and, mingled, dry.
Be thou glad, I will laugh with thee.
Mirth is maddest when two are by.

Be thou lone, I will come to thee:
Twaining hearts make dearth of woe.
Be thou ill, I will sit by thee,
And bid thy devil quickly go.

THE COMRADE

Be thou living, I 'll live with thee,
Strong in waking and warm in sleep.
Be thou dead, I will lie with thee
Under the cedars, cold and deep.

FRANCES

YOU were a dog, Frances, a dog,
And I was just a man.

The Universal Plan,—

Well, 't would have lacked something
Had it lacked you.

Somehow you fitted in like a far star
Where the vast spaces are;

Or like a grass-blade
Which helps the meadow

To be a meadow;

Or like a song which kills a sigh
And sings itself on and on

FRANCES

Till all the world is full of it.
You were the real thing, Frances, a soul!
Encarcassed, yes, but still a soul
With feeling and regard and capable of woe.
Oh, yes, I know, you were a dog, but I was
just a man.

I did not buy you, no, you simply came,
Lost, and squatted on my door-step
With that wide strap about your neck,—
A worn one with a huge buckle.
When bigger dogs pitched onto you,
You stood your ground and gave them all
you had
And took your wounds unwhimpering, but
hid them.

My, but you were game!
You were fine-haired
And marked with Princeton colors,
Black and deep yellow.

FRANCES

No other fellow
Could make you follow him,
For you had chosen me to be your pal.
My whistle was your law.
You put your paw
Upon my palm
And in your calm,
Deep eyes was writ
The promise of long comradeship.
When I came home from work,
Late and ill-tempered,
Always I heard the patter of your feet upon
the oaken stairs;
Your nose was at the door-crack;
And whether I 'd been bad or good that day
You fawned, and loved me just the same.
It was your way to understand;
And if I struck you my harsh hand
Was wet with your caresses.

FRANCES

You took my leavings, crumb and bone,
And stuck by me through thick and thin.
You were my kin.
And then one day you died,
At least that 's what they said.
There was a box and
You were in it, still,
With a sprig of myrtle and your leash and
blanket,
And put deep;
But though you sleep and ever sleep
I sense you at my heels!

A LOST MESSAGE

A FADED letter, wave-cast, flutt'ring
here

Upon the shore where my feet chanced to
stray!

Fain would I know what lover's plaint or
plea

It bore, or e'en perhaps the tidings of a day
Which sank a sailor to his ocean tomb,
Or saw the citadels of some far town
Crumble before the guns of marshaled hosts
Ere the red sun, which smiles at strife, went
down.

What heart was in the letter? or what hope?

A LOST MESSAGE

What cry of pain, or chant of victory?
Deeply the message lies, hidden for ay,
Within the throbbing bosom of the sea!

BY LOVE OF HER

O LASSIE girl, I never dreamed
That I would love you as I do!
You came unbidden to my life
And now my life is simply—you.

The grass is greener 'neath my feet;
The sun is redder o'er the hill;
And oftener at dusk I hear
The chant of some far whip-poor-will.

The squirrels gray climb higher than
The 'foretime squirrels used to climb,

BY LOVE OF HER

And from their tow'r the bells ring out
With strange, new sweetness in their
chime.

The glad stream laves its silver stones
And swifter runs unto its sea,
And all the joy a heart can hold
The kindly gods have sent to me.

And so the ox-eyed daisies sway
With grace no daisies knew before,
And once I surely saw the stern,
Dark ocean gently kiss the shore.

Erstwhile a dull-sens'd man of clay,
How blind was I until you came
Bringing love's vision to my eyes,
Charming life's embers into flame!

BY LOVE OF HER

O lassie girl, I never dreamed
That I would love you as I do!
You came unbidden to my life
And now my life is simply—you.

THE WEAVER OF THE WOOD

I WALKED the wood through leafy
paths unknown

And found a green mantilla woven on a
stone,

All dext'rously in intricate design,

By unseen fingers through the rain and shine
Of many fitful days.

My lady's shoulders ne'er compelled amaze
With drape surpassing this,

Yet, save my own, the eye of man must miss
This artistry in mossy fiber shown—

This green mantilla woven on a stone.

THE MARINER

O GOD, call out to me!
Amid the voices of the tossing sea,—
Competing, clamorous, bidding for my
soul,—

Give me thy cheer and let me see the scroll,
Full-lit by myriad steady stars,
Whereon are chartered clear the deeps and
bars

Of life's broad ocean where my sail is set.
The course is dim to me—aye, dim, and
yet

Somewhere, afar maybe, with lights agleam,
Waits the fair harbor of my hope and dream.

THE MARINER

The storm is high—astern the shelt'ring
lea—

Dear God, call out to me!

AFTER TOIL

I KNOW a path, shell-bordered, where
the hollyhocks abloom

Are drawn in parti-colored ranks to let me
pass between,

And the sun upon the windows of a dainty
curtained room

Has laid its parting benison in iridescent
sheen.

The bucket in the latticed well with fresh-
drawn water drips,

And the dipper, hung await within its
wonted, shaded place,

AFTER TOIL

Seems quite to sense my weariness and
beckon to my lips,
And there's water in the basin for the cool-
ing of my face.

The linen on the table, set for two, is
smoothed and white,
And the berries in their crystal dish with
sugar powdered o'er,
And I think there's something extra in the
baking-tins to-night,
And some one waiting for me at the open
cottage door.

O Prince, condone my eagerness—for hurry
blame me less,
And be not grieved because I envy not your
place of state;

AFTER TOIL

'T is time for home and her, O Prince—I'm
needing her caress,
And I know her eyes are fixed upon the
latchet of the gate.

REVIEW

DIMLY the spent days range themselves
in rows;

Backward we look upon the serried files;

And what strong heart would fain recall the
blows,

Fate-struck,—the weariness, the tears, the
smiles?

We did not live as we had planned to do;

We did not walk the path our eyes descried;

What deemed we sweet turned out but bitter
rue;

Our firstling joys came fair, but quickly died.

REVIEW

Still the mosaic, Life, so deftly wrought,
Within the halls of memory is hung
As wonderful as if the things we sought
Had all been found, and all our songs been
sung.

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